



## The Gambler

written by Don Schlitz

made famous by Kenny Rogers in 1978

### The song lyrics

On a warm summer's eve  
On a train bound for nowhere  
I met up with the gambler  
We were both too tired to sleep  
So we took turns a-starin'  
Out the window at the darkness  
The boredom overtook us,  
And he began to speak

He said, "Son, I've made a life  
Out of readin' people's faces  
Knowin' what the cards were  
By the way they held their eyes  
So if you don't mind me sayin'  
I can see you're out of aces  
For a taste of your whiskey  
I'll give you some advice"

So I handed him my bottle  
And he drank down my last swallow  
Then he bummed a cigarette  
And asked me for a light  
And the night got deathly quiet  
And his face lost all expression  
He said, "If you're gonna play the game, boy  
You gotta learn to play it right

You've got to know when to hold 'em  
Know when to fold 'em  
Know when to walk away  
And know when to run  
You never count your money  
When you're sittin' at the table  
There'll be time enough for counting  
When the dealin's done

Every gambler knows  
That the secret to survivin'  
Is knowin' what to throw away  
And knowin' what to keep  
'Cause every hand's a winner  
And every hand's a loser  
And the best that you can hope for is to die  
In your sleep

And when he finished speakin'  
He turned back toward the window  
Crushed out his cigarette  
And faded off to sleep  
And somewhere in the darkness  
The gambler he broke even  
But in his final words  
I found an ace that I could keep

You've got to know when to hold 'em  
Know when to fold 'em  
Know when to walk away  
And know when to run  
You never count your money  
When you're sittin' at the table  
There'll be time enough for countin'  
When the dealin's done